

Healthy Visions joins state, federal efforts to reinstate sex education Title V funding

Healthy Visions of Cincinnati has joined state and federal efforts to retain funding of relationship-based sexual education programs offered to Ohio teenagers in public and private schools.

Carole Adlard, executive director of Healthy Visions in Cincinnati, said that Healthy Visions treats students as consumers, presenting them with information on sexual choices and the costs versus benefits of these choices.

Using this relationship-based sex education approach, students learn factual information on the effectiveness of contraceptives for the prevention of pregnancy and STDs, and the transmission and symptoms of STDs. Students explore the role sex plays before marriage and in marriage, and how to build healthy relationships. Relationship-based sex education also assists students in setting life goals.

Adlard suggested that Ohio state government has not yet looked at all the data on relationship-based sex education classes.

According to a 2004 study performed by the Journal of Adolescent Health, the majority of the decline nationwide in teen pregnancies is due to these types of classes, which outline the benefits of sexual abstinence. And, according to the National Campaign to Prevent Pregnancy, the teen birth rate in Ohio dropped 36 percent between 1991 and 2004, saving taxpayers an estimated \$300 million in 2004 alone.

Clearly, she said, delaying sex until marriage prevents teen pregnancies and the transmission of STDs—and saves taxpayer dollars.

Additionally, parents prefer this approach. According to a 2007 Zogby poll, eight of 10 parents nationwide want their teenagers to wait until marriage before having sex.

Ohio government has decided to turn down federal money funding programs that teach relationship-based programs promoting abstinence as an integral component of teen and middle school sex education classes.

“It is important for taxpayers to realize that these are not Ohio tax dollars,” said Adlard. “This is not taking money away from another program to spend the money on relationship-based sex education. Federal tax dollars totaling \$2.4 million will be given to other states if state legislators do not accept the funding. Refusing these funds cuts existing programs that communities depend on as a component of their sexuality education for teenage students. Our teenagers and their parents cannot afford to have the state turn down these federal funds.”

Now is the time to weigh in with the governor and state legislators and ask them to support relationship-based sex education in middle and high schools.

Adlard asks that supporters of continued access to Title V sex education federal funding contact Gov. Strickland's office through Dec. 7 at (614) 466-9354. Contact Adlard at (513) 793-7268 for more information. Access the Healthy Visions Web site at www.healthyvisions.org.